

(Washington, DC) - U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-4) today issued the following statement on Robert Morris University's new report indicating that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) new Competitive Bidding Program could put hundreds of western Pennsylvania's small medical equipment suppliers out of business. This would jeopardize the care of patients who rely on their services and cost hundreds of people their jobs.

In addition to holding a hearing in October to investigate the economic and health care costs associated with CMS' Competitive Bidding Program, Congressman Altmire has also co-sponsored the Medicare Durable Medical Equipment Act. This bill would allow eligible suppliers to continue providing equipment and services to Medicare patients at the lower competitive bid rate established by CMS, even if they were not initially awarded a contract. Congressman Altmire is also pressing CMS to be more forthcoming about how the Competitive Bidding Program will impact small businesses.

"The report released by Robert Morris University today adds to a mounting body of evidence that indicates CMS' Competitive Bidding Program is a bad deal for small medical equipment suppliers and the patients they serve.

"I am deeply concerned that CMS is moving ahead with implementing its new Competitive Bidding Program without truly accounting for the toll it could take on our local economy. If hundreds of western Pennsylvania's small medical equipment suppliers are forced to close, thousands of hard-working people will lose their jobs and countless patients will no longer be able to receive quality, personalized service close to home.

"I will continue pressing CMS to make common-sense changes to its Competitive Bidding Program so that we can find an effective way to cut costs without unfairly squeezing small medical equipment suppliers out of the marketplace and jeopardizing patient care."